

AROUND THE HOUSE

Fall, Winter & Holiday Safety

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Now that the seasons have changed, it is a good time to be reminded of ways to keep you, your family and your home safe as we transition from summer to fall and winter.



With the approaching holidays, even more care is needed, to ensure a safe, happy holiday for everyone. Following are tips for decorating, lighting and entertaining during the holidays.



To prepare your home for fall and winter, remember to:

- Disconnect garden hoses from **outside faucets**. Public Housing tenants should know that repairs for plumbing problems caused by leaving hoses connected, will be charged to the tenant.
 - Close exterior **foundation vents**. This will prevent cold air from circulating under the floors, and reduce heating bills. (Houses without basements won't have these vents).
 - Have all **heating appliances** (furnaces, water heaters and wood stoves) checked and serviced yearly by a reliable professional.
 - Have chimneys inspected by a professional. Creosote, a chemical substance that forms when wood burns, builds up in the chimneys and can cause a fire if the chimney is not properly cleaned.
- Fire safety is important to remember at this time of the year. Following are tips and reminders so that you and your family can be safe.
- Install and maintain **smoke detectors**. A properly operating smoke detector can warn you of a fire in time to escape. There should be at least one working smoke detector on each level of your home. Check batteries every 6 months and replace with new batteries.
 - Carbon monoxide** detectors are another good idea. They can determine if deadly fumes are present and should be installed and maintained just like smoke detectors.
 - Develop a **fire escape** plan and have regular fire drills so everyone will know what to do, where to go, etc., in the event of a fire.
 - Space heaters** need space. Keep them at least 3 feet from anything that can burn. Never leave them on when you go to bed or when you leave the house.
 - Unattended cooking** is the leading cause of home fires. Never leave the cooking area when food is being prepared and keep cooking areas clear of items that can burn (towels, paper, etc.).

- Use **holiday decorations** which are flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible.
- Keep **candles** away from decorations and do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees.
- Carefully inspect **lights** for damaged cords. Do not mount lights so that the cords can become damaged. Do not overload extension cords. Always unplug lights before changing fuses, and when leaving the house or going to bed.
- Keep children and pets away from lights and electrical decorations.
- When entertaining, provide plenty of **large, deep ashtrays** and check them frequently. Cigarette butts can smolder in the trash and cause a fire, so completely douse them with water before discarding.
- Always keep **matches and lighters** away from children. Teach them that these are not toys and for adults to handle only.

*Best Wishes for
Safe, Happy Holidays!*

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Housing and Community Services Department Mission

*... to provide housing
and related services
to benefit the citizens
and neighborhoods of
Wichita*

Milestones



New Employees!! Welcome!

The Housing and Community Services Department welcomes two new Maintenance Workers:

- Steven Mount transferred from the Water and Sewer Department.
- Lee Converse transferred from Public Works.

Read *No Matter What!* Celebrate Children's Book Week November 14-20, 2005

Kansas Reads to Preschoolers is a One Book, One State project that aims to have Debi Gliori's *No Matter What* read to all children five and under in Kansas. **You** can help by sharing this story with the children in your life. Check out Debi Gliori's *No Matter What* from the Wichita Public Library and make reading together a habit.

It's a fact: Reading aloud together will develop a special bond between you and your child. Touch between parent and child is very important to the development of the brain and emotions.

This is just one of many opportunities provided by the Wichita Public Library, to learn and have fun!

While you're at the Library or perhaps one of the City's neighborhood City Halls, stop by the information counters. You will find all kinds of information including recently placed Fair Housing brochures.

Around the House

From the Director's Chair

Mary K. Vaughn



As we approach the holiday season this newsletter has provided tips for home and personal safety. However the holidays also present a time for reflection and planning.

Over the past year our country has been challenged with the human and physical damage left by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. Many communities have opened their arms to the victims of these disasters and most areas are well on the way to recovery.

These situations remind us all that homelessness can occur with little or no notice. While many people appear to

be homeless 'by choice', often people are forced into this homelessness by such situations as a job loss, death of a parent or spouse, major illness—or natural disaster such as a hurricane, tornado or flood.

Since many of these situations cannot be predicted or avoided, everyone should have a financial plan — just in case.

There are a number of ways to plan for the future and everyone can do so—even if your income is very limited. Several organizations in our community offer classes which can help. You will find infor-

mation to help prepare for homeownership elsewhere in this newsletter, however even if becoming a homeowner is not your goal, it is important that everyone establish a savings plan. Setting aside even a few dollars each month, can help prepare for unanticipated situations. Please keep this in mind and make starting a personal savings plan, one of your New Year's Resolutions.

In the meantime, as we enter the holiday season, let us all remember those who are less fortunate and share whatever we have—including our time—to bring joy to those who can't do for themselves!

Service & Satisfaction Survey

-Tom Byler

It's that time of year again—time for the annual HUD Service and Satisfaction Survey!

What is the Survey? The Resident Service and Satisfaction Survey is sent to a sampling of public housing residents at each public housing agency (PHA) on a yearly basis to find out how satisfied they are with the living conditions of their unit or development. This survey is part of HUD's increased commitment to monitoring Public Housing Agencies.

How will HUD use resident's input? Your satisfaction and experience with

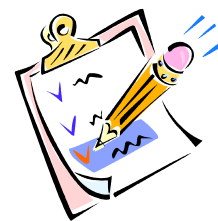
your living conditions will be included in HUD's yearly evaluation of your housing agency, the Wichita Housing Authority.

This survey was developed with the help of housing authority resident leaders and representatives of the industry.

Who will be asked to fill it out? Public Housing residents throughout the nation will be included in the survey process. Not all residents will receive a survey. The surveys should arrive in mailboxes sometime between December 6, 2005 and February 8, 2006. Wichita Public Housing residents will be chosen

randomly using HUD's computer program. The survey will take place yearly, so if a resident does not receive a survey this year they may in the future.

Your cooperation in returning the survey promptly will be appreciated.



SECTION 8 FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM AWARDED 2006 RENEWAL FUNDING AN ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR A NEW POSITION

- Gail Lotson

On September 27, 2005, Housing and Urban Development Alphonso Jackson announced funding for housing agencies in 48 states across the country. **The Wichita Housing Authority, Section 8 office received \$163,710 for two Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinators and a new third position: Homeownership Coordinator.**

Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) and its funding is aimed at helping families become employable and self-sufficient.

Secretary Alphonso Jackson stated, "Because of this funding individuals who receive HUD voucher assistance will also get job training or educational development to find employment or get a better job. "Gaining employment or increasing one's potential to obtain a higher paying job is the first step in economic independence that leads to a world full of opportunities, including homeownership."

The Family Self-Sufficiency program is a voluntary program and is available for Section 8 participants. One of the many incentives for families to become part of the Family Self-sufficiency Program is the escrow account. Families can earn an escrow account by increasing their earned income and increasing the amount

of rent they pay. The outcome may lead to a family becoming self-sufficient and no longer needing assistance within a five-year time frame.

Participants in the Housing Choice Voucher/Family Self-Sufficiency program sign a contract that stipulates the head of the household will get a job and the family will no longer receive welfare assistance at the end of the five-year term. As family's income rises during the term of the FSS contract, a portion of that increased income is deposited in an interest-bearing escrow account. If the family completes its FSS contract, the family receives the escrow funds that they can use for any purpose, including down payment on a home purchase, paying educational expenses, starting a business or paying back debts.

If you are interested in participating in the Family Self-Sufficiency program contact the Section 8 office at 462-3700 for an application to be mailed to your home or come by the office.

If you have questions about the FSS Program contact Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinators Shaun Davis (462-3703) or Trivea Nolan (462-3765).

Section 8 Landlord Meeting—Reminder

The Section 8 program will host its annual landlord meeting on:

Friday, November 18, 2005

1:30 pm

**Wichita State University
Metropolitan Complex**

5015 E. 29th Street North—Room 180

Current and future landlords are encouraged to attend to learn about program changes and get your questions answered. Call Vicki Liguori at 462-3784 for more information and to register.

Salvation Army Christmas Assistance

The Salvation Army recently announced that it will provide Christmas assistance for residents of Sedgwick County. You may apply for one program only within Sedgwick County. All applications for Operation Holiday, Toys for Tots, Catholic Charities will be checked through a shared computer database.

You must provide the following information for all members of your household:

ADULTS

- Legal form of identification for every adult living in the home. (drivers license, work permit, social security card, birth certificate).
- Proof of income for the last 60 days for every adult (2 months of payroll checks)
- Proof of your address. (something mailed to your home within the past 30 days)

CHILDREN

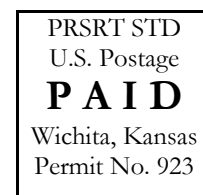
- Legal form of identification for every child living in your home. (social security card, birth certificate, school PIF, etc.)

APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED MONDAY THRU FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7 TO NOVEMBER 23, 2005 AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

- Citadel Corps, 1739 S. Elpyco
- West Orchard Corps, 2151 W. Dora (Monday-Friday, 10 am to 3 pm)
- City Command, 350 N. Market (Mon-Wed-Fri, 10 am to 4 pm; Tues-Thurs, 10 am to 6:30 pm)

CURRENT HAP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

<i>Month</i>	<i>Mail Date</i>
NOVEMBER 2005	OCTOBER 28, 2005
DECEMBER 2005	NOVEMBER 29, 2005
JANUARY 2006	JANUARY 4, 2006
FEBRUARY 2006	JANUARY 31, 2006



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Home Buyer Education Classes

-Mark Stanberry



Are you interested in learning more about homeownership? Would you like to receive more information about homeownership without talking to a real estate agent or a mortgage lender? If so, you might want to check out the homeownership training opportunities that are available through three local non-profit agencies.

City-recognized homeownership training classes are designed to provide basic information regarding the home buying process. You will learn about working with real estate agents and home mortgage lenders. You will also gain a basic understanding of home purchase contracts, the home financing process, credit repa-

ration, insurance, home inspections, things you should consider when selecting a home, and everything involved in the closing process. You will also learn about the various down payment assistance programs that are available to help you with the purchase of a home.

The following agencies offer City-recognized homeownership training opportunities:

Community Housing Services
4620 E. 13th Street
Wichita, KS 67208
685-2656

Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services
2145 N. Topeka
Wichita, KS 67214
942-4848

Urban League of the Mid-plains
1802 E. 13th
Wichita, KS 67214
262-2463

These agencies are also HUD-recognized housing counseling agencies and can provide assistance and counseling for a variety of housing-related issues.

If you think you might be interested in becoming a homeowner, this would be a great way to get started. Call today to find out about class schedules!